

### ***Congresswoman introduces bill to help prevent bullying and harassment***

**Washington, DC** –On Friday, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez introduced bi-partisan legislation that helps ensure a safe learning environment at schools nationwide. The Safe Schools Improvement Act (H.R. 1648) would help provide schools with the resources they need to prevent school bullying and reduce the rising drop-out rate.

**“No student should ever be afraid to come to school because they are being intimidated by bullies,”** said Congresswoman Sánchez. **“Every student has the right to a safe and comfortable learning environment. Bullying is violent and destructive behavior and we have to stop treating it as a minor nuisance: it is a serious problem that damages a student’s academic progress, not to mention overall mental health.”**

The Safe Schools Improvement Act would require schools and school districts to ban bullying and harassment. This proposed legislation would ensure that schools protect students, whether they are being targeted based on their race, gender, real or perceived sexual orientation, or any other basis. Congresswoman Sánchez introduced The Safe Schools Improvement Act in the previous two sessions of Congress.

Since coming to Congress, Congresswoman Sánchez has been a leader in advocating for safe schools for all students. Last month, Congresswoman Sánchez was invited to a White House conference on bullying prevention because of her leadership in Congress in pushing for anti-bullying legislation.

In February, Congresswoman Sánchez introduced the “Put School Counselors Where They’re Needed Act” (H.R. 667). This legislation would allocate vital funding to high schools with high drop-out rates so those schools can hire additional counselors. Nationwide statistics indicate that 10% of high school dropouts cited bullying for quitting school.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act has garnered support from broad range of organizations, including the National PTA; the American Federation of Teachers; the American Library

Association; Big Brothers Big Sisters of America; the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network; the Human Rights Campaign; and the National Council of La Raza.

###